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SECURITY COUNCIL
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Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 40/12 of 13 November 1985, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the principles involved and the action required with regard to the situation relating to Afghanistan.
2. During the past year sustained efforts have been made, with increasingly broad support from the international community, to achieve a negotiated political settlement. I am gratified that the United Nations has received in this context the full co-operation of all the concerned Governments.
3. The General Assembly will recall that in my last report (A/40/709-S/17527), I explained that, having virtually completed the drafting of three of the four instruments that will comprise the settlement between Afghanistan and Pakistan - those on non-interference and non-intervention, on the return of the refugees and on international guarantees - an impasse over the format of the negotiations had regrettably stalled the diplomatic process. That impasse could not be overcome when a further round of negotiations was convened at Geneva from 16 to 20 December 1985. Therefore, without having been able to begin the consideration of the fourth draft instrument - which sets out the interrelationships between the aforementioned instruments and the withdrawal of troops - the interlocutors were obliged to adjourn the talks.
4. In the circumstances, my Personal Representative, Diego Cordovez, made another trip to the area for consultations from 7 to 18 March 1986. In Islamabad, Mr. Cordovez met with President Zia ul-Haq, Prime Minister Junejo and Foreign

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Minister Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan. At Kabul he met with President Babrak Karmal and Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost. For technical reasons, Mr. Cordovez was unable to stop in Teheran, but in accordance with established practice the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran was duly briefed on the contents of the discussions.

5. Consequent upon extensive consultations in the area, which required Mr. Cordovez to travel several times between Islamabad and Kabul, it was possible to work out a set of understandings which had the effect of breaking the impasse that for a period of almost two years had slowed down and eventually crippled the diplomatic process. Mr. Cordovez reported to me that both Governments, at the highest level, had stated in that context that they wished the understandings reached to be seen as a concrete demonstration of their sincere desire to achieve a political settlement.

6. In the mean time the diplomatic process had been supported by positive expressions of intent by the two designated guarantors, the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the United States of America. In point of fact, in the course of consultations concerning the text of the instrument on international guarantees held by my Personal Representative in Moscow with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and with First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Kornienko, and in Washington, D.C., with Acting Secretary of State John C. Whitehead and Under-Secretary Michael Armacost, he was informed that the text in question was acceptable to the two Governments - subject, of course, to the conclusion of an overall settlement that they could support.

7. In keeping with the understandings reached during the visit of my Personal Representative to the area, the seventh round of negotiations commenced at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 5 May 1986. The interlocutors considered for the first time a draft of the instrument on interrelationships. The negotiations, which were intensive and difficult, were characterized by the serious approach shown by the two interlocutors who felt that substantial progress had been made in the formulation of extremely difficult and sensitive sections of the document. The interlocutors finalized, inter alia, the text of the principles and objectives of the settlement, including non-intervention and non-interference, the non-use of force and self-determination. The negotiations were suspended on 23 May at the request of the interlocutors, to enable them to hold consultations in their respective capitals.

8. At that stage there were outstanding two issues in the draft text of the instrument on interrelationships under consideration: the arrangements to ensure effective implementation of the settlement and the time-frame for withdrawal. The seventh round of negotiations was resumed from 31 July to 8 August 1986 to consider these matters.

9. There was encouraging movement concerning the arrangements for the effective implementation of the settlement. Indeed, while in May the diplomatic process had not been able to overcome rigid attitudes of principle and policy, it was obvious in August that, after a period of reflection, there was a willingness to approach the problem anew with an open mind. My Personal Representative held a more

detailed discussion with the two interlocutors about the nature and scope of the arrangements that might be required in this context. It was felt that, in the circumstances in which the settlement was likely to enter into force, and given the fact that the settlement would set out specific interrelationships between the various measures envisaged, the determination of each of the Parties to implement its obligations fully and faithfully would naturally be enhanced by the conviction that the other side was acting with equal determination. This should be, therefore, the underlying purpose of the arrangements to be incorporated in the settlement. My Personal Representative accordingly submitted a revised proposal which was the subject of a preliminary discussion in Geneva and which the two interlocutors have been examining in their capitals.

10. On the other outstanding question - the time-frame and modalities for the withdrawal of troops - there is still a wide gap between the stated position of the two interlocutors. On each of the two occasions on which this matter was discussed - that is, during the May and August rounds - there was, however, some movement away from the original starting point. There is reason to believe that this denoted a continuing disposition to find a mutually acceptable formula regarding the length and modalities for withdrawal. The two interlocutors are in any case undoubtedly aware that they must focus their attention on this question with a sense of urgency lest all their efforts over the past five years come to naught.

11. As agreed when the negotiations were suspended, my Personal Representative has remained in touch with the two interlocutors through diplomatic channels on all the questions that are outstanding. These consultations will be pursued during the current session of the General Assembly, which will provide me and my Personal Representative with an opportunity to meet with the interlocutors and with representatives of other concerned Governments.

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12. There is no doubt that tangible progress has been made during the past year. Procedural questions have been laid aside to enable all substantive problems to be tackled. The four instruments that will comprise the settlement are virtually complete. Agreement has been reached on a very large number of extremely complex issues, any one of which could have become a major obstacle to the finalization of the settlement. Moreover, as they approach the conclusion of the drafting of the instruments that will comprise the settlement, the interlocutors have become increasingly convinced that it is essential to ensure that the settlement is broadly supported and effectively implemented - and they are actively engaged in the consideration of practical measures to that end. It should also be recalled that, on the eve of the August round, General Secretary Gorbachev, in a move which he described as designed to speed up a political settlement, announced in Vladivostok the withdrawal of six regiments from Afghanistan, stressing the expectation that this unilateral step would be answered by a curtailment of outside interference. Further, General Secretary Gorbachev supported the efforts of national reconciliation in Afghanistan, including the setting up of a government with the participation in it of political forces which find themselves outside the country's borders. 1/

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13. These developments should encourage all the Governments concerned to pursue the efforts towards a political settlement with renewed vigour. The negotiations have at times lacked a sense of urgency and the readiness to conclude the settlement has not always appeared entirely transparent to either side. Mutual confidence, which is important now, and which will be indispensable if the settlement is to be effectively implemented, will only be promoted if the pending provisions are finalized with resolution and without further delay. Bold and decisive steps of national reconciliation will indeed be needed to ensure that the settlement commands the support of all segments of the Afghan people. There ought to be a wider realization in all the concerned quarters that their overriding need is to live together in peace. For that same reason, and as a means of restoring good-neighbourly relations, the Governments of the region should promote the finalization of a settlement. All of the above leads me to conclude by repeating again that political will is of the essence. The international community undoubtedly expects that it will be forthcoming in the months ahead.

Notes

1/ The text, in extenso, of the statement made by General Secretary M. S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok on 28 July 1986, is before the Assembly in document A/41/505.
